IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as indicated below.

1. (Previously Presented) An aqueous pigment paste that is stable, transportable, and storable for up to three months, comprising

(A) from 15 to 40% by weight of at least one metal pigment,

(B) from 0.45 to 0.75% by weight of at least one nonassociative thickener comprising at least one methacrylate copolymer based on C_1-C_6 alkyl (meth)acrylate and (meth)acrylic acid,

(C) from 0.1 to 0.4% by weight of at least one organic amine,

(D) from 0.5 to 8% by weight of at least one nonionic surfactant, and

(E) at least 50% by weight of water,

based on total weight, wherein the aqueous pigment paste is free from binders, including grinding resins used for dispersing pigments, wherein the aqueous pigment paste is usable for producing an aqueous coating material by mixing the aqueous pigment paste with at least one aqueous mixing varnish comprising at least one water-soluble, water-dispersible, or water-soluble and water-dispersible binder.

2. (Previously Presented) The paste of claim 1, wherein the thickener (B) comprises in copolymerized form at least two different C_1-C_6 alkyl (meth)acrylate monomers.

3. (Previously Presented) The paste of claim 1, wherein the thickener (B), based on its total weight, comprises from 40 to 60% by weight of methacrylic acid in copolymerized form.

4. (Previously Presented) The paste of claim 1, wherein the organic amine (C) is selected from the group consisting of tertiary amines.

5. (Previously Presented) The paste of claim 4, wherein the tertiary amine (C) is selected from the group consisting of hydroxyalkylamines.

6. (Previously Presented) The paste of claim 5, wherein the hydroxyalkylamine (C) is dimethylethanolamine.

7. (Previously Presented) The paste of claim 1, wherein the metal pigment (A) comprises an aluminum pigment.

8. (Previously Presented) The paste of claim 1, comprising at least 52% by weight of water, based on total weight.

9. (Previously Presented) The paste of claim 1, comprising

(A) 34% by weight of an aluminum pigment,

(B) 0.53% by weight of a nonassociative thickener comprising at least one methacrylate copolymer based on C_1-C_6 alkyl (meth)acrylate and (meth)acrylic acid,

(C) 0.22% by weight of an organic amine,

(D) 0.61% by weight of a nonionic surfactant, and

(E) 54% by weight of water,

based on total weight.

10. (Previously Presented) A method of preparing a coating material, comprising adding an aqueous pigment paste free from binders and grinding resins, as claimed in claim 1, to prepare an aqueous coating material comprising the metal pigment.

11. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 10, wherein the aqueous coating materials are aqueous basecoat materials.

12. (Previously Presented) A method for making a multicoat paint system, comprising applying the aqueous coating material of claim 10 to a substrate.

13. (Currently Amended) A process for preparing an aqueous coating material comprising at least one effect pigment, comprising

mixing at least one pigment paste with at least one aqueous mixing varnish comprising at least one water-soluble and/or -dispersible binder and homogenizing the resulting mixture,

wherein the at least one pigment paste comprises at the least one aqueous pigment paste free from binders and grinding resins, as claimed in claim 1, and is used in an amount such that the resulting mixture comprises

from 0.1 to 6% by weight of at least one metal pigment (A),

from 0.05 to 2% by weight of at least one nonassociative thickener (B) comprising at least one methacrylate copolymer based on C_1-C_6 alkyl (meth)-acrylate and (meth)acrylic acid, and

from 0.02 to 2.4% by weight of at least one nonionic surfactant (D), based on total weight.

14. (Previously Presented) The process of claim 13, wherein the binder is selected from the group consisting of random (co)polymers, alternating (co)polymers, block (co)polymers, linear (co)polymers, branched (co)polymers, comb addition (co)polymers, (co)polymers comprising ethylenically unsaturated monomers, polyaddition resins, polycondensation resins, and combinations comprising at least two of the foregoing.

15. (Previously Presented) The process of claim 14, comprising at least one member selected from addition (co)polymers of ethylenically unsaturated monomers selected from the group consisting of (meth)acrylate (co)polymers, partially hydrolyzed polyvinyl esters; , polyaddition resins selected from the group consisting of polyesters, alkyds, polyurethanes, polylactones, polycarbonates, polyethers, epoxy resin-amine adducts, polyureas, polyamides, polyimides, polyester-polyurethanes, polyether-polyurethanes, polyester-polyether-polyurethanes and combinations of at least two of the foregoing; polycondensation resins selected from the

group consisting of polyesters, alkyds, polyurethanes, polylactones, polycarbonates, polyethers, epoxy resin-amine adducts, polyureas, polyamides, polyimides, polyester-polyurethanes, polyether-polyurethanes, polyester-polyether-polyurethanes and combinations of at least two of the foregoing; and combinations of at least two of the foregoing.

16. (Previously Presented) An aqueous pigment paste that is stable, transportable, and storable for up to three months, comprising

(A) from 15 to 40% by weight of at least one aluminum metal pigment,

(B) from 0.45 to 0.75% by weight of at least one nonassociative thickener comprising at least one methacrylate copolymer based on C_1-C_6 alkyl (meth)acrylate and from 40 to 60% by weight of (meth)acrylic acid in copolymerized form, based on the total weight of the nonassociative thickener,

(C) from 0.1 to 0.4% by weight of at least one organic amine,

(D) from 0.5 to 8% by weight of at least one nonionic surfactant, and

(E) at least 50% by weight of water,

based on total weight, wherein the aqueous pigment paste is free from grinding resins used for dispersing pigments, and other binders, wherein the aqueous pigment paste is usable for producing aqueous coating materials by mixing the aqueous pigment paste with at least one aqueous mixing varnish comprising at least one water-soluble, water-dispersible, or water-soluble and water-dispersible binder.